call upon the government for a return of the duties, than he would to demand of the ſeller a diminution in the price, or to aſk the poſſeſſor of his note or bond that he may be exonerated from the payment for any article purchaſed in the market, merely becauſe the bargain was not advantageous, or becauſe the merchandize was burnt or deſtroyed which formed and conſtituted the evidence of "value received." It is with regret the committee make theſe obſervations, but they wiſh it to be generally underſtood by the merchants, that in no caſe could they deem it proper to adviſe the Houſe to refund the duties upon merchandize deſtroyed by any accident whatever.

It is true the Treaſury of the United States ought not be enriched from the loſſes of private individuals, and that our revenue is chiefly derived from the duties on articles conſumed in the country, but when it is fairly conſidered that to abandon claims upon the importers would lead to numerous impoſitions, that if ſome were relieved from debts contracted in good faith (although the articles on which thoſe debts originated were actually deſtroyed) it might induce others to expect ſimilar indulgencies, without having equal claims upon the national bounty. And as there exiſts a ſtrong neceſſity of preſerving uniformity in theſe deciſions, and as it cannot be reaſonably expected that Congreſs ſhould now deviate from a long courſe of practice founded as it is on equitable and *strict commercial principles*, the committee recommend that the petitioners have permiſſion to withdraw their petition.

Read and agreed to in the Houſe of Repreſentatives, January 6th.

Letter from the Secretary of the Treaſury, addreſſed to William Lattimore, on the ſubject of lands South of the ſtate of Tenneſſee.

Treasury Department,
21ſt *December* 1804.

Sir,

I have the honor to encloſe extracts from letters, received from the commiſſioners, appointed to aſcertain the claims to lands in the Miſſiſſippi territory.— The inconveniencies which they point out may it ſeems, be remedied without deranging or retarding the completion of the buſineſs, entruſted to their care. I will only add, that owing to the ſickneſs and death of Mr. Kirby, the certificates to be iſſued in conformity with the deciſion of the board at Mobile, are not yet ſigned; and that, for that reaſon, the board will not, probably, be diſſolved till March next. If any duties ſhall be enjoined on them, in relation to the lands Eaſt of the Tombigbee, which ſhall require their attendance beyond that time ſome proviſion for an additional compenſation may perhaps be neceſſary.

I have the honor to be,
Reſpectfully,
Sir,
Your obedient ſervant.
ALBERT GALLATIN.
Hon. Mr. Lattimore, Chairman &c.

EXTRACT *of a letter from the land commiſſioners, Eaſt of Pearl river, to the Secretary of the Treaſury dated Auguſt 3d, 1804.*

"Both the acts above-mentioned, exclude from the juriſdiction of the commiſſioners all claims to land, where the Indian title has not been extinguiſhed. On inſpection of the confirmation of the boundary line, between the United States and the Chactaw nation, executed on the 31ſt of Auguſt, 1803, by general Wilkinſon on the one part, and Mingo Poos Coos, and Ala-ta-la-Hoomah on the other part, we find the limits thus deſcribed "beginning in the Hatcha Comiſa, or wax river, where the limits between the United States and Spain, croſs the ſame; thence up the channel of ſaid river, to the confluence of Chickaſaw Hay and Buckatannee rivers, thence up the channel of the Buckatannee to Bogue Hoomah or Reed creek, and thence with the various courſes in ſaid inſtrument written to the main branch of Sintee Bogue or Snake creek, and thence with ſaid creek to the Tombigbee river, thence down the main channel of the Tombigbee and Mobile rivers to the above mentioned line of limits, between the United States and Spain, and with the ſame to the point of beginning."

By report, only, we are informed that general Wilkinſon, in behalf of the United States, run, marked, and confirmed a line of demarkation, between the United States and the Creek Indians, beginning on the eaſt ſide of the Tombigbee river and on the north or upper ſide of the Bayou by the name of the *Cut off*, (which flows between the Alabama and Tombigbee, alternately, as either of theſe rivers are higheſt) and thence as ſpecified in ſaid treaty. The iſland formed by theſe waters called the Nannee Hubba, containing about *twenty thouſand* acres of the firſt quality of land, has been recently claimed by the Chactaw nation.

Theſe Indians refer to the before mentioned lines, ſettled on the 31ſt Auguſt, 1803, as evidence of their never having relinquiſhed their right to Nanree Hub-ba Iſland. It is, however, certain, that during the times when the Britiſh and Spaniſh governments held the juriſdiction of this country, the iſland in queſtion was in the occupancy and excluſive poſſeſſion of their reſpective ſubjects, and has in like manner continued in the poſſeſſion of the American citizens, ſince the juriſdiction has been ſurrendered to the United States.

It is believed, that the Indian title was extinguiſhed by the Britiſh, and that the ſame will appear by the *field notes* of Mr. Purcell, an Engliſh ſurveyor, and that theſe notes are, or were in the poſſeſſion of general Wilkinſon, and it is alſo ſaid, that general Wilkinſon was fully of opinion that this iſland belonged to the United States. However ſatisfactory theſe circumſtances may be in the formation of private opinions, a judicial tribunal cannot proceed on ſuch looſe grounds; it muſt require official documents to juſtify its judgment. Any board which may be appointed to adjuſt the claims on the eaſt ſide of the Tombigbee, will find inſuperable difficulties, unleſs the government is pleaſed to furniſh ſuch official documents and other evidence, as may lead to a correct deciſion.

Extract of a letter from the land commiſſioners, eaſt of Pearl river, to the Secretary of the Treaſury, dated Auguſt 3d, 1804.

"As the aſcertainment of the rights of perſons to land on the eaſt ſide of the Tombigbee river, was not included in the proviſions of the act of the 3d March, 1803, the inhabitants there conceived it optional with them, whether or not, to enter their claims with the regiſter of the land office by the 31ſt of March, 1804: On the recommendation of the commiſſioners, the claims were perhaps generally, though not entirely entered, but it is probable, and indeed certain, that many important documents, neceſſary to a correct adjudication on thoſe claims, have not in conſequence of the above mentioned conſtruction of the law been entered. It is conceived that no board, which may be authoriſed to decide upon theſe claims, can do juſtice, if the claimants are barred from completing their entries at the regiſter's office: the act of the 27th March, 1804, ſupplementary to the act of 3d March, 1803, contains no proviſions applicable to this object."

Letter from the board of commiſſioners, weſt of Pearl river, in the Miſſiſſippi Territory, to the Secretary of the Treaſury, dated November 1ſt, 1804.

Sir,

In attending to the law under which we are acting, we diſcover ſome defects which will require legiſlative interpoſition: and we beg leave to make our communications on thoſe ſubjects, through your department, to that body.

The ſixth ſection of the act of the 3d of March, 1803, requires that the certificates granted by the board, ſhall be entered with the regiſter, on or before the firſt day of January, 1805.

The ſeventh ſection of the ſame act, requires that the commiſſioners, ſhall, on or before the firſt day of December, 1804, make to the Secretary of the Treaſury, a full report of all the Britiſh grants, legally and fully executed, which have been duly recorded in conformity to the proviſions of that act, the title to which is not confirmed by the articles of agreement, &c.

And the act paſſed the laſt ſeſſion of Congreſs, ſupplemental to the above mentioned act, prolongs the time for filing claims with the Regiſter, until the laſt day of November, 1804.

The Board now beg leave to remark, that the Legiſlature will ſee, on the firſt view of the ſections here cited, that it is impoſſible for the commiſſioners to make the report required by the firſt day of December aforeſaid, it being the very next day after the laſt day of filing claims.

And as in conformity to a ſuggeſtion from the Secretary of the Treaſury, no certificate will be iſſued until after the laſt day of this inſtant, (November), it will from the nature of the buſineſs be impoſſible for the Board to iſſue all the certificates in the month of December, immediately following, and have them entered in the Regiſter's office, by the firſt day of January, 1805.

There are already nearly two thouſand claims filed, and it is probable they will exceed that number before the expiration of the time limited for bringing in and filing. Many of them depend on a variety of title, and many on a variety of teſtimony ſcattered about, to and fro, and difficult to be obtained; ſo that it ſeems impoſſible for the Board to intimate to the Legiſlature any certain period, in which this buſineſs can be concluded without great probable injury to the claimants: but as they are extremely deſirous of completing it as ſoon as poſſible, they are diſpoſed to proceed in it as expeditiouſly as the nature of the buſineſs will admit. They have a hope, that it may be finiſhed by the firſt of May or June next, but cannot ſpeak with certainty. It is a buſineſs of great magnitude, from the country's having paſſed through the hands of ſeveral nations, is of great difficulty: and the commiſſioners are deſirous of anſwering what they ſuppoſe to be the wiſh of the United States, that is, ſo to complete the buſineſs, as to render the people happy, and their titles permanent as far as it depends on the Board.

Having made this repreſentation, they leave it with the Legiſlature to do what in their wiſdom they may think beſt.

And the Board beg leave to make one further remark, to wit: In conſequence of the additional time the Board will be detained in ſeſſion, by the ſupplemental act, the Legiſlature has allowed the commiſſioners, *but not the clerk*, additional compenſation. It is true, that the allowing an aſſiſtant clerk will leſſen his labour, but will put nothing into his pocket; and when the Board begin to iſſue certificates, there will be full employment for them both.

We have the honor, &c.
(Signed) THOMAS RODNEY,
EDWARD TURNER.

The hon. Albert Gallatin,
Secretary of the Treaſury of the U. S.

WASHINGTON CITY.

FRIDAY, January 11.

THE Delegates of the diſtrict of Columbia are adviſed that an adjourned meeting will be held at Semmes's Hotel, George town on Monday next at ten o'clock A. M.

THE MISSOURI.

The following intereſting account of the Miſſouri, tranſlated from the French, is drawn up by a gentleman in the Weſtern Country, on whoſe intelligence and accuracy great reliance may be placed. The larger part of the facts is derived from actual obſervation. The view, which they preſent of the products on that ſtream, will be gratifying to all our readers, and peculiarly intereſting to the mercantile part of the community, by opening to them a new ſource of trade, that promiſes amply to reward their enterpriſe.

The Miſſouri, with whoſe ſources we are ſtill unacquainted, is notwithſtanding already ranked among the largeſt rivers. It is an object of aſtoniſhment to the whole world. The uninformed man admires its rapidity, its lengthy courſe, the ſalubrity of its waters, and is aſtoniſhed at its color: while the reflecting mind admires the innumerable riches ſcattered on its banks, and foreſeeing the future, beholds already this rival of the Nile flowing through countries as fertile, as populous, and as extenſive as thoſe of Egypt.

A traveller, however intelligent he may be, can give but a faint idea of the innumerable riches accumulated on its banks. This ſketch will barely point out the moſt important; happily for our age, ſome intelligent travellers are engaged, under the auſpices of an enlightened government, in tracing this river even to its ſources. What gratitude will not the whole world owe to thoſe men, who, expoſing themſelves to the greateſt fatigues, and even to the greateſt dangers, to enlarge the circle of human knowledge, will (if we may be allowed the expreſſion) give to the world a new country.

The Miſſouri joins the Miſſiſſippi five leagues above the town of St. Louis, about the 40th deg. of north lat. It is neceſſary to obſerve that after uniting with the Miſſiſſippi, it flows through a ſpace of 1200 miles, before it empties itſelf into the Gulph of Mexico. As this part of its courſe is well known, I ſhall ſpeak of the Miſſouri only. I aſcended about 600 leagues without perceiving a diminution either in its width or rapidity. The principal rivers which empty into the Miſſouri are, as you aſcend, the Gaſconade, the river of the Oſages, the two Charatous, the Great river, the river Des Canips, Nichinau, Batoney, the Great and Little Nimaha, the river Plate, the river de Sioux, the L'Eau Qui Court, &c. &c. &c.

As far as 25 leagues above its junction with the Miſſiſſippi are to be found different ſettlements of American families, viz. at Bonhome and Feme-Oſage, &c. beyond this, its banks are inhabited only by ſavage nations—the great and little Oſages, ſettled 120 leagues on the river of that name, *the Canips, the Ottos, the Panis, the Loups, or Panis Mahas*, the Mahas, the Poukas, the Ricaras, the Mandanes, the Sioux; this laſt nation is not fixed on the banks of the Miſſouri, but habitually come there to hunt.

The banks of the Miſſouri are alternately woods and prairies; it is remarked that the higher you aſcend this river, the more common are theſe prairies, and they ſeem to encreaſe every year by the fires which are kindled every autumn by the ſavages or white hunters, either by chance or with the deſign of facilitating their hunting. The waters of the Miſſouri are muddy, and contain throughout its courſe a ſediment of very fine ſand which ſoon precipitates; but this circumſtance, which renders them diſagreable to the ſight, takes nothing from their ſalubrity.

Experience has proved that the waters of the Miſſouri are more wholeſome than thoſe of the Ohio, and the upper Miſſiſſippi. The rivers and ſtreams, which empty, into the Miſſouri, below the river Plate, are clear and limpid, but above this river, they are as muddy as thoſe of the Miſſouri itſelf. This is occaſioned by beds of ſand or hills of a very fine white earth from whence they take their riſe. The bed of the Miſſouri is obſtructed with banks ſometimes of ſand and ſometimes of gravel, which frequently change their place, and conſequently render the navigation always uncertain. Its courſe is generally Weſt by North Weſt.

To give a preciſe idea of the incalculable riches ſcattered on the banks of the Miſſouri would require unbounded knowledge.

The flats are covered with huge trees; the *Liard*, or Poplar. The Sycamore, out of one piece of which are made Canoes, which carry almoſt 18,000 wt. The maple, which affords the inhabitants an agreeable and wholeſome ſugar.

The wild cherry tree, and the red and black *walnut*, ſo uſeful in joiners work.

The red and white *elm*, ſo neceſſary to cartwrights.

The *Triacanthos*, which, when well trimmed, forms impenetrable hedges.

The water-willow, the white and red mulberry tree.

The linden tree, the horſe-cheſnut of India, ſo much prized in the European gardens, &c. &c.

On the ſhores are found in abundance, the white and black oak, proper for every kind of ſhip-wright, and Carpenters work.

The pine, ſo eaſily worked, and on the ſtony mountains, the durable cedar.

It would be impoſſible to detail all the ſpecies of trees, even thoſe unknown in other countries, and of the uſe that can be made of which we are ſtill ignorant.

The plants are ſtill more numerous; I will paſs lightly over this article, for the want of a ſufficient Botanical knowledge. The Indians are well acquainted with the virtues of many of them, they make uſe of them to heal their wounds & to poiſon their arrows, they alſo make uſe of different kinds of *savoyanues*, to dye different colors; they have one which is a certain and prompt cure for the veneral diſeaſe, in ſhort, they carefully conceal from us a plant, which renders them for a few moments inſenſible to the heat of the moſt ardent fire. I have ſeen them ſeize a red hot iron, or a burning coal without ſuffering.

The lands on the borders of the Miſſouri are excellent, and when cultivated, are capable of yielding abundantly all the productions of the temperate and even ſome of the warm climates; Wheat, Maize, and every ſpecies of grain, Iriſh potatoes, and excellent ſweet potatoes; *Hemp* ſeems here to be an indigenous plant: even cotton ſucceeds, though not as well as in more Southerly countries; its culture however, yields a real advantage to the inhabitants ſettled on the banks of the Miſſouri, who find in the crop of a field of about two acres ſufficient for the wants of their families.

The natural *prairies* are a great reſource, being of themſelves excellent paſturages, and facilitating the labors of the man who is juſt ſettled, and who can thus enjoy, with little labor, from the firſt year a conſiderable crop. Clay fit for making bricks, is very common:— there is alſo found *Fayance clay*, and even a ſpecies of clay which in the opinion of intelligent perſons is the real kaholin to which the porcelain of China owes the whole of its reputation.

There are found on the borders of the Miſſouri, many ſprings of ſalt water of every kind, which will be more than ſufficient for the conſumption of the country, when it ſhall become inhabited.

Salt-petre is found in great abundance in numberleſs caves, which are met with along the banks of the river.

The ſtones are generally calcareous, and gates. There is found alſo one which I believe peculiar to the banks of the Miſſouri. It is of a blood red colour, compact, ſoft under the chiſſel, and hardens in the air, and is ſuſceptible of a moſt beautiful poliſh. The Indians make uſe of it for their calumets; but from the extent of its layers it might be eaſily employed in more important works. They have alſo quarries of marble, of which we only know the colour; they are ſtreaked with red. One quarry is well known, and eaſily worked, viz. a ſpecies of plaiſter, which we are aſſured is of the ſame nature as that of Paris, and of which the United States make a great uſe.

They alſo find volcanic ſtones, which demonſtrate the ancient or preſent exiſtence of unknown volcanoes.

The ſhort ſtay we have generally made among the ſavage nations has prevented us from making thoſe reſearches, which would have ſupplied us with more extenſive information reſpecting the various mines found on the borders of the Miſſouri; we know with certainty only of thoſe of iron, lead and coal; there is however no doubt but that there are ſome of tin, of copper, of ſilver, and even of gold, according to the account of the Indians, who have found ſome particles, or duſt of theſe metals either on the ſurface of the earth, or on the banks of ſmall torrents.

The products which are drawn from the Miſſouri are obtained from the Indians, and hunters, in exchange for merchandiſe. They may be claſſed according to the ſubjoined table.

			Dolls.	Cts.
Caſtor,	12,281 lbs. at 1	20	14,737	20
Otters,	1,265 skins 4.		5,063	
Foxes, Poshs foxes, Tyger cats,	802 skins	.50	401	
Racoons,	4,248 skins	.25	1662	
Bears, black, grey, yellow, Puce,	2,541 skins 2.		5,082	
Buffaloes,	1,714 skins 3.		5,142	
Dreſſed cow hides,	189 skins 1.	50	283	50
Shorn deer-ſkins,	96,926 lbs.	40	38,770	40
Deer ſkins with hair,	6,381 skins	.50	3 190	50
Tallow & fat,	8,313 lbs.	20	1 662	60
Bears oil,	2,310 galls 1.	20	2 572	
Muſkrats,	——	——	——	
Martens,	——	——	——	
		Dollars	77,971	20

The calculations in this table, drawn from the moſt correct accounts of the products of the Miſſouri during fifteen years, make the average of a common year 77,971 dollars.

On calculating, in the ſame proportion, the amount of merchandiſe entering the Miſſouri and given in exchange for peltries, it is found that it amounts to 61,250 dollars, including expences, equal to one fourth of the value of the merchandiſe.

The reſult is, that this commerce gives annually a profit of 16,721 dollars, or about 27 per cent.

If the commerce of the Miſſouri, without encouragement, and badly regulated, gives annually ſo great a profit, may we not reſt aſſured that it will be greatly augmented, ſhould government direct its attention to it. It is alſo neceſſary to obſerve that the price of peltries fixed by this table is the current price in the Illinois; if it were regulated by the prices of London, deducting the expences of tranſportation, the profit according to our calculation, would be much more conſiderable.

If the Miſſouri, abandoned to ſavages, and preſenting but one branch of commerce, yields ſuch great advantages, in proportion to the capital employed in it, what might we not hope, if ſome merchants or companies, with large capitals, and aided by a population extended along the borders of the river, ſhould turn their attention to other branches of trade, which they might undertake (I dare ſay) with a certainty of ſucceſs, when we conſider the riches buried in its banks, and of which I have endeavoured in theſe notes to give an idea.

Although my intention has been only to ſpeak of the Miſſouri, I conſider it a duty at the ſame time to give an idea of the ſalt mines and the ſalines, which are found in the ſame latitude, on the branches of the river Arkanſas. At about 300 miles from the village of the great Oſages, in a weſterly direction, after having paſſed ſeveral branches of the river Arkanſas, we find a flat, ſurrounded by hills of an immenſe extent, and about 15 leagues in diameter, the ſoil is a black ſand, very fine, and ſo hard that the horſes hardly leave a trace. During a warm and dry ſeaſon, there exhales from this flat, vapors, which, after being condenſed, fall on this black ſand, and cover it with an incruſtation of ſalt, very white and fine, and about half an inch thick; the rains deſtroy this phenomenon.

At about 18 miles from this flat, there are found mines of genuine ſalt, near the ſurface of the earth; the Indians, who are well acquainted with them, are obliged to uſe levers to break and raiſe it.

At a diſtance of about 15 leagues from the flat, of which we have juſt ſpoken, and in a ſoutherly direction, there is a ſecond mine of genuine ſalt of the ſame nature as the other. Theſe two mines differ only in colour; the firſt borders on a blue, the ſecond approaches a red. In ſhort, much further ſouth, and ſtill on the branches of the Arkanſas, is a ſaline, which may be conſidered as one of the moſt intereſting phenomena in nature.

On the declivity of a ſmall hill there are five holes, about a foot and a half in diameter, and two in depth, always full of ſalt water, without ever overflowing. If a perſon were to draw any of this ſalt water, the hole would immediately fill itſelf; and at about 10 feet lower, there flows from this ſame hill a large ſtream of pure and ſweet water.

If this country were peopled, the working of theſe genuine ſalt mines would be very eaſy, by means of the river Arkanſas. This ſpecies of ſalt, is found by experience to be far preferable to any other for ſalting proviſions.

Should theſe notes, imperfect and without order, but in every reſpect founded on truth, and obſervations made by myſelf, excite the curioſity of men of intelligence, capable of inveſtigating the objects, which they have barely ſuggeſted, I do not doubt but that incalculable advantages would reſult to the United States, and eſpecially to the diſtrict of Louiſiana.

It is impoſſible to give an exact account of the peltries, which are brought down the Miſſiſſippi, as they are all immediately tranſported to Canada, without paſſing by any poſt of this diſtrict. We can obtain a true ſtatement only